

Liaison

Library Association News-Sheet

News Editors: E. E. Moon and R. G. Surridge

March 1958

L.A. COMPLETES ROBERTS COMMITTEE EVIDENCE

Opposition by County Librarians

After months of work by a tough and resilient sub-committee and a final six hours of argument by the Council itself, the L.A. memorandum of evidence—all 27 foolscap pages of it—is agreed and has been submitted to the Roberts Committee.

Throughout the long special Council meeting on 16th January strong and perpetual opposition came from what appeared to be a *county bloc*. Of the more than four pages of amendments laid on the table before the meeting, nearly 90 per cent. had been submitted by Miss Cook. Leading the opposition in Council with unswerving vocal persistence was Mr. Shaw Wright, whose habit of asking for names to be taken of those recording votes against certain sections of the memorandum led to a reference by Mr. Tynemouth to "the seven golden angels recorded in the book this morning". Of the seven golden angels, five were county librarians—Miss Cook, Miss Paulin and Messrs. Ashby, Budge and Shaw Wright—and two Heads of Library Schools, Messrs. Harrison and Stokes.

At the end of the meeting the report was adopted by a large majority. Only four opposed the adoption of the report, and they again asked that their opposition be recorded. They were Miss Cook, Miss Paulin, Messrs. Budge and Shaw Wright.

We present here only the main features of the memorandum, particularly some of those items which were most strongly contested.

The first five questions from the Roberts Committee called for a minimum figure of annual expenditure below which an independent service cannot be provided efficiently by a local authority, a reasonable rate for library purposes and a minimum population figure. These questions were not answered specifically for the following reasons: "Over the years several attempts have been made to define a national standard for public libraries in terms of either population or financial resources, below which it is not practicable for a community efficiently and economically to establish and administer an autonomous library service. Such attempts have failed because they have sought to over-simplify a problem which is complex and we think it proper to call attention to some of the major factors (other than finance and total population) which must be considered."

Among the factors quoted were: "the limitations imposed by the general structure of local government; the common habit of looking to a "natural" centre for the satisfaction of many social and cultural needs; the wide range of readers' interests which are unrelated to the bibliographical resources of the library authority on which they rely; density of population; and the desire to retain local autonomy."

£8,000 FOR BOOKS

Despite these reservations the report could not, and did not altogether ignore figures, and the first great divide came when the Council reached the paragraphs dealing with book expenditure. These opened with one or two uncontroversial remarks referring to the 2s. per head figure recommended by the Library Association since 1950, and to the fact that the appendix to the memorandum showed that over 11 million people in this country already enjoy

a library service based on a book expenditure in excess of this figure. "One would expect", says the memorandum, "that the smaller the population group the larger the book expenditure per head and a book expenditure in excess of 2s. per head might reasonably be expected among the smaller population groups. Instead we find that below 40,000 population the median figure lies between 9d. and 1s. 4d. *The inescapable deduction is that the bookstocks must be inadequate.*"

The report goes on to say that in order to present a reasonable number and variety of books to the public "a weekly intake of at least 120 new books at present prices for lending purposes, and not including possible obligations under co-operative schemes, must be regarded as a minimum." The cost of these was estimated at £3,600, and this figure increased to £5,000 to cover replacements and duplicates. It is stressed in the report that this is a figure for *lending purposes only*, and that to it should be added another £3,000 to cover the cost of reference materials, binding, periodicals and non-book materials. This minimum total figure for book expenditure of £8,000 per annum was higher than the original memorandum had quoted, but considerably lower, for example, than the figure of £28,000 tabled in an amendment by Miss Cook.

SIZE OF AUTHORITY

The next chasm of disagreement yawned when the Council reached the passage dealing with minimum population figures for the provision of a library service. The county librarians already referred to were in favour of library areas with populations between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million, as quoted in the 1943 L.A. Proposals, but were prepared to accept a minimum of 100,000. Mr. Stokes submitted a further compromise figure of 75,000 population, but the report retained its original proposal more or less intact as follows:

"With the greatest goodwill towards the smaller autonomous authorities struggling under the weight of adverse circumstances we cannot avoid the conclusion that in the light of modern needs it would be difficult for a case to be made out for the retention of autonomous library powers by some *authorities serving populations below 40,000*. Nevertheless we believe that there is no point in change unless it is demonstrably for the better and in view of the complexity of the problem we consider that a reasonable period of inspection should precede a decision to deprive a community of autonomous library powers."

Many of the questions which followed deal with the division of powers between county councils and county district councils, relinquishment of powers,

etc. These are not easily summarized and the L.A. answers will be better understood if they are left until the full report is published.

One question on which there was unanimous agreement was that which asked: "Should library matters continue to be referred to the Education Committee, as they must be at present in county councils, or might they be referred to a Library Committee, as at present they may be in non-county borough and urban district councils." The L.A. pointed out that, except for county councils, only East Ham and Barking have resolved to refer library matters to an Education Committee, and Hastings has had to do so since it adopted the Libraries Acts after 1919. It was recommended that "in view of the desirability of full and free contact between the Council and the Library Committee . . . there is now abundant justification for the appointment in every type of Library Authority of a Standing Committee reporting direct to the Council and dealing solely with library matters."

A Charge for Records

Question 12 asked whether the library service should continue to be provided free of charge, and mentioned articles other than books, such as pictures, photographs and gramophone records. The L.A. report affirmed that the public library service should continue to be free in all respects, and said: "we do not agree that a charge should be permissible in respect of other articles". Two Council members, for different reasons it seemed, wanted the reference to charges for other materials to be deleted, but they found little support. The L.A. also noted "with surprise the implication in the question that a charge ought to be made for extra-district residents", and said, "we regard it as an important objective of a national public library service that a reader should be able to use the service most convenient to him, without direct charge".

There was little disagreement with the latter half of the report, which is devoted to answering the complex question 13, which had caused much of the previous delay. This asks what improvements are desirable in the response of libraries to the cultural needs of their areas and a number of questions concerning the relationships which should exist between libraries of various types. Some useful additions were made to this section of the report, notably a plea by Mr. Carter for "reference library services of a higher quality", and an expression of the urgent need, also by Mr. Carter, for a substantial library building programme. At the request of Miss Paulin a further paragraph was included which underlines the need for an improvement in children's library services.

Virtue in Old Compton Street

Compared with what had gone before, the second half of the meeting was clean, quiet and uneventful. Inevitably the report is a compromise document, which attempts to steer a reasonable course between the many variant interests on the Council itself. All who hold extreme views at either end of the scale will be disappointed, as was Mr. Wray (another county librarian) who said: "Looking for virtue in this document is like looking for it in Old Compton Street. It tries to be all things to all men—when you come to think about it, very much the same business."

Mr. Gardner Congratulated

At the end of the meeting unanimity was achieved once more when the Council thanked the sub-committee, and particularly its chairman, Mr. Frank Gardner, for the vast amount of work and time which had gone into the completion of this extremely difficult task.

The Honorary Secretary, Mr. Paton, and Mr. Gardner, were elected as the representatives of the Council to present the memorandum and give oral evidence to the Roberts Committee.

NOW AVAILABLE Roberts Committee Evidence

Copies are now available of the printed evidence submitted by the Library Association to the Roberts Committee. The official title is: *Memorandum of Evidence to be laid before the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education to consider the structure of the public library service in England and Wales, and to advise what changes, if any, should be made in the administrative arrangements, regard being had to the relation of public libraries to other libraries.* Price of the pamphlet is 3s., or 2s. 6d. per copy for quantities of 1 dozen or over, post free.

LIBRARIES AND THE A.M.C.

The Association of Municipal Corporations, as reported in the March Supplement of *Municipal Review*, has announced the composition of the sub-committee of its General Purposes Committee which is to prepare a memorandum of the Association's views on libraries for consideration by the Roberts Committee.

Its members are:

Chairman, Alderman J. F. W. Hill (Lincoln).

Vice-Chairman, Sir William Grimshaw (Hornsey).

Alderman E. Swale, D.F.C., J.P. (Chesterfield).

Alderman A. W. Graham Brown (Guildford).

Alderman T. Haskins (Banbury).

Alderman D. R. Simson (Beverly).

Councillor S. Irving, M.P. (Dartford).

Councillor J. J. Virr (Dudley).

Councillor J. Thorpe (Sheffield).

Councillor Miss E. Woods (Hammer-smith).

The Town Clerks of Newcastle upon Tyne, Aldershot and Brighton.

The Librarians of Manchester, Chelmsford and Weston-super-Mare, and

The City Treasurers of Kingston-upon-Hull and Peterborough.

It was also reported in the March number of the *Municipal Review* that the A.M.C.'s new **Standing Committee on Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries**, set up last year, has now come into being. Its full membership appears in that Journal's February supplement. Its Chairman has yet to be appointed.

GIDDY READERS

A brief paragraph in the *News Chronicle* reported that "borrowers from the public library at Swadlincote, Derbyshire, have been complaining of giddiness when they go to choose books because the library floor slopes due to mining subsidence."

NEW YORK "ROBERTS" COMMITTEE

Summary Report Published

At a time when librarians and authorities alike in this country are wondering what the Roberts Committee will recommend, it is interesting to note that in America a committee set up with roughly similar terms of reference has just reported.

In the spring of 1956 Dr. James E. Allen, State Commissioner of Education, set up a committee "to review the present status of public library service in New York State, to analyse and to evaluate the recent progress made, and to make recommendations to continue the improvement and extension of library service to the people of the State". A summary of the recommendations made by the Commissioner of Education's Committee on Public Library Service was printed in *The Bookmark*, December, 1957.

POPULATION AND BOOKSTOCK

In the second part of the report, which deals with "systems of libraries", the committee recommended that there be no more than 25 systems in the state, and that in general, "to provide an adequate base of support, each system should serve at least 200,000 persons or an area of 4,000 square miles".

A number of interesting observations are made concerning bookstock standards, including the recommendation that "each system should include a central collection of books, carefully selected and carefully maintained to meet community needs. There should be at least 100,000 volumes in each of these central collections. If no library in a system has a live collection of this size it is recommended that the largest collection be built up rather than that a new facility be established". On the question of the number of books to be purchased in any year—a subject which provided one of the hottest debates when the L.A. Council were considering their evidence for the Roberts Committee—the New York Committee recommended that each library system should purchase annually approximately one book for each five persons served, "including about 5,000 new titles". The report added, "Motion picture films, sound recordings and other media of communication should supplement and enrich the information in book form".

STAFF

Some very specific recommendations are made in the report about the number of staff required. For example, "The committee recommends that every public library system approved by the Commissioner have as a central staff, at least six certified librarians and at least twice as many library workers performing non-professional tasks". In addition it is recommended that for any community library serving 5,000 or more people there should be at least one professional librarian, and that there should also be a professional on each book-mobile. A further suggestion is that "The State Education Department should establish 50 special competitive scholarships for graduate education in librarianship".

STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL

Systems of libraries, whether established or proposed, will have to submit plans of their services to the Commissioner of Education for approval. These plans will have to meet the established standards, and no library system will be fully approved by the Commissioner unless, "in addition to meeting other established standards", it fulfils the population requirements stated above. Systems serving a minimum of 50,000 persons may be given provisional approval if they meet a number of other requirements including "a five-year plan for meeting *all* of the standards required for full approval at the end of that period".

Other sections of the summary report deal with the revised state aid formula for library systems and individual libraries in the State, and the Education Department's administration of the State's public library programme. It is interesting to note that the Reference Department of the New York Public Library, presumably as the "regional" reference library, will receive a special State grant of up to 400,000 dollars per year.

German Librarian Seeks Pen-Friend

A German librarian has written to ask us to find somebody interested in a correspondence on library matters "though it must not be exclusively on this subject". His name is Dieter Michael: the address, Berlin, Niederschöneweide, Brückenstrasse 7. Herr Michael is 27 years of age, married, and works in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. He also says that he is fond of English literature.

New N.B.L. Appointment

A former Chairman of the National Book League, Mr. Joseph Compton, C.B.E., was invited by the League, and has accepted the appointment as Head of the Education Department. This post fell vacant when Mr. Antony Kamm left for the Bodley Head in February.

Mr. Compton was until last summer Borough Education Officer of Ealing, and he is already an extremely well-known figure both in the world of education and of books. He is Chairman of the Poetry Book Society, and also a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain and its Executive Committee.

NEW AUDIO-VISUAL READING MACHINE

From Japan comes news of a synchronized reading machine which enables a person to read books, newspapers or letters while at the same time listening to life-like recordings of the text of such reading matter. Sheets of printed matter with natural voice recordings of the text on the reverse side are placed in a special reading machine. The "voice" is reproduced by magnetic recording-reproduction system. In other words, the backs of the sheets of printed matter serve as "recording tapes".

The machine is the invention of Professor Yasushi Hoshino of Tokyo Technological University, and it is expected that it will be on sale by about the middle of this year. It is at present about the size of a standard model typewriter, but eventually Dr. Hoshino hopes that it will be trimmed down to the size of a large book. He predicts that many of Japan's electric machinery and appliance companies will join in mass producing the machine within the next two years. Dr. Hoshino has applied for patents for his invention in many foreign countries as well as Japan.

Outlining some of the uses of the machine he said that it will be particularly valuable in the fields of audio-visual education, entertainment, correspondence and business.

WELSH LIBRARIES ON THE AIR

On the 22nd January, 1958, the Welsh B.B.C. commenced a monthly series of programmes dealing with public libraries, produced by Mr. W. R. Owen, the B.B.C. West Wales Representative who was at one time librarian of Bangor City Library and before that on the staff of the library of the University College of North Wales, Bangor. The series is designed to inform the public of Wales of the services provided in Welsh Public Libraries.

The programme was opened by Mr. Glyn Davies, County Librarian of Montgomeryshire, who said that the first county library service in Wales was commenced in 1916 in Caernarvonshire with the generous support of the Carnegie U.K. Trust and by 1926 every county in Wales had a library service. Mr. T. I. Ellis, who represents the National Library of Wales on the Roberts Committee, said that the main concern of this Committee was with the provision of the best possible library service to the public and that whilst it was not their intention to interfere with the internal administration of the libraries they wished to ensure that the type of local government administration was the one best suited for this purpose. He stated that the Committee had already agreed that Wales should have full consideration of its problems and that these would be discussed at a meeting to be held at the National Library of Wales in March.

Miss M. G. Williams of the Swansea Public Library described the Gramophone Record Library in Swansea with its recordings of music, poetry and drama and its comprehensive collection of Linguaphone and other language-teaching courses. She referred also to the films of local events which were filed in the library archives in Swansea and the new technique of microfilms, microcards and other photographic devices for the improvement of the service. Sir Ifor Williams, formerly Professor of Welsh Language and Literature at Bangor, discussed the layman's attitude to the improved services in public libraries, praising the effectiveness of the Regional Library Scheme in obtaining books not available locally.

This series will, we hope, continue for some time and the producer is keeping in constant touch with the Welsh Branch through its secretary.

Small Libraries in Wales

A general meeting of the **Wales and Monmouthshire Branch** was held at the Central Library, Cardiff, on Wednesday, 4th December, and members were welcomed by Mr. J. E. Thomas, the City Librarian, on behalf of the Chairman of the Libraries Committee who was not able to attend. The speaker was Mr. H. G. T. Christopher, the Borough Librarian of Penge, and a Vice-Chairman of the

Smaller Libraries Group, and he discussed the position of the small libraries in relation to the main alternatives of absorption or improvement and extension, as affected by recent trends and enquiries. This was of particular interest to Wales where so many libraries served populations of under 40,000 and the discussion was opened by Mr. Harold Prescott of Llanelli, a member of the Executive Committee of the group. The Rev. Ifor Davies, Borough Librarian of Colwyn Bay and Chairman of the Branch, presided.

Welsh Books Abroad

Every British Council library throughout the world—more than 75—will in future have a section on Wales, which will include books covering all aspects of Welsh life. This was one result of a meeting in February of the British Council's Welsh panel under the chairmanship of Lady Megan Lloyd George, M.P.

The panel recommended also that photographs of Wales and recordings of music by modern Welsh composers be distributed to overseas centres as well as lectures recorded on tape. A further suggestion will be made to the organisers of the Festival of Wales that an exhibition of the photographs of Wales be held at Cardiff during the period of the Empire Games.

Public Medical Libraries Swansea Too

In the January issue we reported on the Medical Library set up in 1954 by agreement between the Hull Hospital Management Committee and the Kingston upon Hull Public Libraries.

The Librarian of Swansea writes to inform us that a similar service has been in operation at Swansea since the early part of 1954. An account of the Swansea service appears in the *L.A. Record*, August, 1956.

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The Trustees of the **British Museum** announce that further accommodation has now been provided for newspapers at the Newspaper Library, Colindale, and that the foreign newspapers recently inaccessible will be available to readers on and after Monday, February 3rd, 1958.

APPOINTMENT OF LIBRARIAN CARLTON P.L.

This post was advertised in the *T.L.S.* on 29th November, 1957 at a salary in accordance with A.P.T.II (£724-£845). The library serves a population of 36,700 and has seven full time staff plus one part-time. The Secretary wrote to the Clerk of the Council on 3rd December informing him that having regard to the N.J.C. grading decisions for library posts, the minimum appropriate grading for this post is A.P.T.III (£845-£1,025). This grade is paid by the vast majority of other independent urban library authorities in the population group 30,000-45,000. No reply was received from the Clerk. A notice was inserted in the *T.L.S.* on 6th December. Of the nine members who communicated with the Secretary six withdrew their applications. Two of the remainder were short-listed with two other members who did not respond to the notice. The four short-listed candidates were interviewed on 16th December and the appointment was offered to and accepted by Mr. H. F. Steele, F.L.A. at the advertised salary.

John Bull's Library

I was interested to read your note on "John Bull's Library" (*Liaison*, February, p. 113). The cover illustration in question is of the children's room at Bebington Public Library and is, in fact, a perfectly faithful representation, drawn by John Bull artist Mays, after a personal visit to the library. The only license Mr. Mays permitted himself was the introduction of the aquarium tank, to balance the picture and to fill up what would otherwise have appeared as an empty patch of floor-space: every other detail he represented exactly as it is. The drawing was made shortly after the library opened, when the stock was still comparatively new—so he can't be accused of idealism, even on that score.

You mention in your note that "there are children's libraries which get near to looking like this". There is one, sir, that looks exactly like this; and I can't help thinking that it's just a wee bit ironical that a small authority (population 50,000) should be able to supply a national journal with the material for a picture of what you flatteringly refer to as an "idealized" children's library. Are we still trying to persuade the Library Association to appoint a Public Relations Officer, by the way?

One other point. You mention the "charming, Vogue-ish assistant" in the picture, and appear to find her "idealized", too. Not a bit of it: at least eight other members of my staff are equally as attractive. I thought it was only members of the public who visualized female library assistants as crones with buns and spectacles, but I can see that I'm wrong.

W. LOWNDES,
Bebington P.L.

DANISH STUDY TOUR

For British Librarians

Last year's Danish Study Tour was so successful that the Danish Institute in Copenhagen has been persuaded to arrange a similar tour for British librarians this year. It will take place from 15th to 27th June. The detailed programme is printed in the March *L.A. Record*.

The Danish Institute will place a guide at the disposal of the party during the stay in Denmark and will pay for certain entertainment. The cost will be £36 10s. per head, Harwich-Harwich. This does not include meals on the boat, but no other expenses would be incurred in Denmark other than personal spending.

The number of places is limited and members wishing to enjoy a wonderful opportunity for seeing Denmark and its library service should apply immediately to Mr. M. Kay-Larsen, The Danish Institute, 3, Doune Terrace, Edinburgh, 3.

BEIRUT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The American University of Beirut is inviting applications from qualified librarians holding university degrees for 3 appointments—serials and documents librarian, reader's adviser and assistant order librarian, and assistant cataloguer. Commencing salary about \$3,100. Further details from University Librarian, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.

NEW EXAMINERS

Following the resignation of Mr. J. C. Harrison as Senior Examiner for Papers 1 and 2 of the First Professional Examination, Mr. H. Sargent, formerly Senior Assistant for this part of the syllabus, has been appointed Senior Examiner. Mr. R. N. Lock, formerly an Assistant Examiner, now becomes Senior Assistant Examiner. Mr Harrison's resignation is due entirely to pressure of work, and there is no truth in the rumour that it was bought about by a disagreement with the Assessors.

Miss E. Leach has been appointed as Senior Examiner in History of English Literature (Romantic Revival to the present day), and applications are to be invited to fill her former post as Senior Assistant Examiner. In the Register and Examinations Executive Committee Mr Tighe raised the question of the need for Examiners in English Literature papers to be Honours Graduates in English, and the Assessors Committee are to discuss this matter at their next meeting.

Having been appointed to the Assessors Subcommittee, Mr W. Tynemouth has resigned as Senior Examiner for the Cataloguing papers in Registration (Group A (ii)) and Final (Part 4(c), 2nd paper). Mr. E. F. Ferry takes his place as Senior Examiner for the Final cataloguing paper, and remains Senior Assistant Examiner for Registration Group A(ii). Mr. Lovell takes over as Senior Examiner for Registration Group A(ii).

Brighton Conference

The programme of meetings for the Brighton Conference has now been settled. Speakers for the general sessions have not yet been fixed, with one exception. Dr. Joseph Trenaman of the B.B.C.'s Further Education Department is to be invited to give a paper on the Influence of Public Libraries in Adult Education based on his research into Adult Education.

A suggestion from the Schools of Librarianship Committee that the Conference theme should be "The re-organization of the Library Association" was not taken up. A further suggestion which was rejected was one for alternative subsidiary session running concurrently with the General Sessions.

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Subject to the availability of certain halls in the borough the 1959 Annual Conference will be held in Torquay from 21st to 25th September.

More from Council

MODERATING COMMITTEES

The Schools of Librarianship Committee and the Standing Committee on Education (London Region) have each been asked to nominate one tutor of a part-time First Professional Examination course to represent oral tutors on the new Moderating Committee for the First Professional Examination.

The Schools of Librarianship Committee have asked for more frequent meetings of Moderating Committees. This has been agreed, subject to finding dates agreeable to each member. A further request from the Schools Committee, that a meeting of the Moderating Committee for Registration Group B be called soon, was also agreed.

SURVEY OF LIBRARY NEEDS

The Library Research Committee heard a report on a Miniature Readership Survey carried out by the South Western Branch of the L.A. Following further verbal explanation by Mr. Helliwell, the committee agreed that the report was sufficiently interesting to justify the consideration of a wider survey as previously suggested in a memorandum by Mr. Bryon. An approach is to be made to the Director of the Social Survey (Central Office of Information) for advice on this matter.

Annual Reports

We reported in January's *Liaison* that libraries were to be asked to supply copies of Annual Reports missing from the L.A.'s library. At the January meeting of the House and Library Committee the Librarian submitted a sample list of Annual Reports missing from the files. Direct application will now be made to libraries (under initials 'A, B, and C as a start), giving holdings in the L.A. Library, asking for information on the years when Annual Reports were published, and enquiring whether gaps can be filled, either by purchase, or where only one copy exists, whether the library in question would be willing to give a photostat. If this is unsuccessful an endeavour will be made to get the missing numbers by advertisement.

Adolescent Reading

Miss Paulin has prepared on behalf of the Council a report to the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) in reply to an enquiry sent to the Library Association concerning the education of boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The report includes, as an appendix, a report by Mr. C. M. Jackson, Borough Librarian of Shoreditch, on some work done in his borough in connection with adolescent reading.